

Social Service Human Relations Board
Minutes of the Regular Meeting, Thursday, January 25, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: Acting President Wasko called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. Present were Wasko, Franz, Chen, Nielsen, Villareal, and Soglin. Staff present were Jones, Wright and Brown.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes for the regular meeting of October 26, 2006 were approved (M/S Franz, Villareal) and unanimous with Member Soglin abstained. The minutes of the November 13, 2006 Special meeting were approved (M/S Villareal, Franz) and unanimous with Member Soglin abstained. The minutes of the December 7, 2006 Special meeting were approved (M/S Franz, Chen) and unanimous with Members Chen and Nielsen abstained.

3-A. PRESENTATION – ALAMEDA COUNTY-WIDE HOMELESS & SPECIAL NEEDS

HOUSING PLAN:

Linda Gardner from Alameda County provided a presentation and asked the SSHRB to endorse the EveryOne Home (Plan), Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan. The goal for this Plan is 15,000 supportive housing units within 15 years through new construction or unit rehabilitation.

Gardner reviewed County-wide Homeless data. According to Gardner, over 16,000 people each year – 6,216 on any given night are homeless in Alameda County. 28% of the homeless individuals countywide are children. Gardner emphasized that the homeless in more suburban areas of the have higher percentages of families with children (including single parent families). The City of Alameda is part of mid County where 71% of the homeless are families. According to Gardner, Alameda County is one of the top 10 *least* affordable housing markets in the U.S. A family earning minimum wage needs to work over 130 hours per week to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment, and a disabled individual receives less per month from SSI than the fair market value of a studio apartment.

The Plan aims to address housing costs and to create supportive housing models that deliver flexible services to support stability & independence of clients, including those exiting institutions such as the foster care system. The Plan also aims to serve those with HIV/AIDS, mental illness, or dually diagnosed who she said can be served better and more cost effectively in supportive housing than in hospital emergency rooms, emergency detox centers, or prisons.

Gardner explained that the EveryOne Home Plan should be customized to meet the needs of the local communities. The Plan has been adopted by the Cities of Berkeley, Fremont, Oakland, and San Leandro. Gardner said the Plan is an opportunity to participate in a national model of countywide strategies to end local homelessness, to coordinate and leverage local resources, and to compete more competitively for state and federal funding.

The Board asked clarifying questions and probed about the nature of services in supportive housing units. The Board inquired as to whether services would be mandatory, how services would ensure increased self-sufficiency of clients, and how the Plan would prevent fraud. Gardner emphasized that cities will create their own implementation plans. The Board emphasized the importance of ensuring

homeless services serve Alameda families in a way that minimizes probability of recurring bouts of homelessness.

Motion to endorse the EveryOne Home Plan while asking for emphasis on the importance of targeting Alameda families and ensuring services empower Alamedans on a path to self sufficiency. (M/S Franz, Chen) and unanimous.

Mr. Andrew Davis, Allied Housing, Inc. – Mr. Davis expressed a thank you to Ms. Gardner for the presentation and the excitement around this Plan. He stated Allied is part of a Tri-City Homeless Coalition and they have projects in many cities within the county. They are active in researching property in Alameda to build supportive housing. He thanked the Board for listening.

3-B. COMMENTS REGARDING HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND FORMULATION OF NEEDS STATEMENT TO THE CITY COUNCIL: Member Franz recused himself from the regular meeting.

Wright delivered a PowerPoint presentation explaining the Community Development Block Grant program's purpose and objectives. CDBG is federally funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD determines the grant based on level of poverty, population growth/lag, and the age of housing in the community. CDBG offers decision-making discretion for local jurisdictions. According to Wright, CDBG's purpose is to develop viable urban communities. Programs should directly benefit very low and low/moderate income people, aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight, and meet an urgent need.

Wright explained that the board's role is to assess community's social service and human relations needs, and provide input in annual needs process.

Terri highlighted FY 06-07's funding priorities and reminded the board that FY 07-08 would be the second year of a two-year funding cycle for public service grantees. Wright asked the Board to review current community development priority needs and special focus areas and to draft a letter to Council regarding FY 2007-08 Priority Community Needs after hearing public comment.

Speakers present were:

Sue Retherford and Scott Cunningham, Bananas, Inc. – Ms. Retherford thanked the Board for the work they do and the funding provided to Bananas, Inc. She stated the average cost of full-time child care alone can cost up to \$195 per week. CDBG funding has provided a total of nine families, 14 children, child care. Bananas, Inc. has an eligibility list of approximately 163 families for Alameda. Mr. Cunningham addressed the Board and is a parent of twins. He thanked Banana's Inc. and this process of being able to speak to this Board. He stated he couldn't make ends meet if it weren't for Banana's. He graciously thanked the Board for listening to him.

George Phillips, Alameda Boys & Girls Club – Mr. Phillips began with thank yous to city staff and to the Board in this important process. The AB&GC has served 185 disadvantaged youth. He encouraged city management to continue to recognize and support disadvantaged families and that this is an important issue to keep in front of city management.

Jim Franz, American Red Cross-Alameda Service Center - Mr. Franz stated his organization serves individuals and families who need safety net services. According to Franz, The ARC deals with poverty, child care, and basic needs of this community, helping folks walk a balance beam. He asked the Board to help in making all services accessible and to possibly help with outreach. He stated it is important for people to understand that asking for help is a stigma we need to overcome, starting by making services more welcoming. He suggested making services available in other languages. He thanked the members of the Board.

Doug Biggs, Alameda Point Collaborative – Mr. Biggs briefly provided an overview of the Collaborative to the Board and mentioned that APC's supportive housing program is aligned with the EveryOne Home Plan. APC maintains about 90% occupancy with 200 families and approximately 500 residents, half of whom are under age 18. The recent APC food security survey helped identify specific resident needs related to nutrition and has resulted in a shuttle service to the food bank and farmers market. However, the goal is longevity. Currently, there are few job opportunities on Alameda Point and hopes of moving toward entrepreneurial opportunities are still in the process. He thanked the Board and members of city staff for all they do.

Paul Russell, Alameda Food Bank – Mr. Russell stated he has been the Executive Director for the past two years and this is the 30th year for the Food Bank in Alameda. He thanked the Board and city staff as the CDBG program has been a stable source of funding. He went on to thank all who were involved with the Community Needs Assessment. There is a greater need than what the service can currently handle. He explained how the food bank helps to stretch the dollar by utilizing all that is out there.

Noel Folsom, Alameda Homeless Network (Midway Shelter) – Mr. Folsom identified himself as the Chair for the Alameda Homeless Network. He thanked city staff and asked this Board to take note that this city is unlike other cities in the way that our General Fund does not fund any community services. He went on to say funding at the State level is in jeopardy, and that most of the Midway Shelter's funding is brought in by their own fund raising efforts, thanks to Mr. Desomone.

Board members asked staff to explain the difference between Technical Assistance dollars and Public Service dollars. Wright explained that technical assistance funding is allocated for projects that enable the non-profits to increase their capacity to delivery services.

Motion to draft a letter to Council, updating to add information about the recently completed Needs Assessment, adding a line to encourage the development of a centralized intake swipe card system for Alameda service agencies. Additionally, the letter should reference improving accessibility to all services for the disabled (not only the affordable housing services). (M/S Chen, Nielsen) and unanimous. Acting President Wasko will review the letter and attend the February 6, 2007 Council meeting.

3-C. LETTER TO EDITOR ON COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT: The Board decided to submit a letter to the editor(s) regarding the Community Needs Assessment. This letter should state key findings in the Needs Assessment, mention what was heard at this meeting, where and how the public can get a copy, and thank all who participated in getting the work done. Acting President Wasko and staff will draft the letter. (M/S Wasko, Villareal) and unanimous.

3-D. CONSIDERATION OF HOSTING A TABLE AT THE LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL:

Member Chen reported sponsoring a table at last years festival and the cost was \$500. The anticipated date for the Lunar New Year Festival is Saturday, March 10, 2007. Motion to delegate this to the Sister City Workgroup and to negotiate a lower price (M/S Franz, Chen) and unanimous. The Sister City Workgroup will report at the next meeting.

3-E. WORKGROUP STATUS REPORTS:

Assessment and Awareness Workgroup – Member Franz

The Alameda Services Collaborative meeting on January 24 included a great presentation by Acting President Wasko to launch the Community Needs Assessment. There were about 30 people in attendance.

Alamedans Together Against Hate – Member Villareal

ATAH met with the Alameda Multi-Cultural Community Center staff and board member about the possibility of co sponsoring an diversity event, possibly a half-day event. ATAH will provide more of an outline at the next meeting.

Family Services Workgroup – Acting President Wasko

The announcement of the departure of the Guggenheims from Alameda Towne Centre brings a change in plans for the Festival of Families. Mr. Corbett is doing all the marketing and has suggested a scaled down version of the festival to about 10 community-based organizations and for them all to be inside one storefront. Wasko suggests that the energy spent for the festival be focused to the ATAH event.

Sister City Workgroup – Member Chen

The workgroup has not met since November. The workgroup is also looking forward in efforts to take this to a non-profit organization. They are regrouping and deciding on a direction to go. Moving forward with a Wuxi, China trip was suggested for early October 2007.

4. BOARD / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS: Staff member Jones thanked all who were present at this meeting.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

6. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Jones, Secretary
Social Service Human Relations Board

MJ:sb